



## AATMANIRBHAR BHARATH AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

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### INTRODUCTION

'Aatma Nirbhar Bharat' or 'Self-Reliance' was the Oxford Hindi Word of Year 2020.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said "Atmanirbhar Bharat is not about being self-contained or being closed to the world, it is about being self-sustaining and self-generating", pursuing "policies that promote efficiency, equity and resilience and creating "wealth and values not only for ourselves but for the larger humanity".

Its proponents have said that this self-reliant policy does not aim to be protectionist in nature; the Finance Minister stated, "Self-reliant India does not mean cutting off from rest of the world".

The law and IT minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said that self-reliance does "not mean isolating away from the world", rather "foreign direct investment is welcome, technology is welcome self-reliant India... translates to being a bigger and more important part of the global economy".

The five pillars of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' have been elucidated as economy, infrastructure, technology-driven systems, vibrant demography and demand. In March 2021, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman reiterated that the Atmanirbhar Bharat campaign was not bringing back socialism or import substitution, rather the intention is to boost manufacturing.

### Aatmanirbhar Bharat

Which translates to 'self-reliant India', is a Hindi phrase used and popularized by the Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi and the Government of India in relation to the economic vision and economic development in the country. In this context, the term is used as an umbrella concept in relation to making India "a bigger and more important part of the global economy", pursuing policies that are efficient, competitive and resilient, and being self-sustaining and self-generating.

The phrase has been used by Modi since 2014 in relation to national security, poverty and digital India. The first popular mention of this came in the form of the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan' or 'Self-Reliant India Mission' during the announcement of India's COVID-19 pandemic related economic package in 2020. Since then phrase has been used across ministries such as the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Defence in relation to press releases, statements and policies. The phrase has also been used by the government in relation to the 2021 Union Budget of India.

The phrase has been used by the former Planning Commission in India's Five-Year Plans. Commentators have noted that India has been enacting policies and building institutions that promote

self-reliance since the day it was created. Private companies and their products have also been considered as fine examples of self-reliance in India such as- the Maruti800 car, Thums Up beverage, Amul, HDFC, the leading pharmaceutical companies of India, and Bharat Biotech and Serum Institute of India.

Indian nationalists emphasized self-reliance in the 1940s. In those years India took cue from economic models in the Soviet Union, later becoming aware of other models such as that of South Korea, Taiwan and Brazil. In a 1983 article by Sanjaya Baru titled "Self-Reliance to Dependence in Indian Economic Development", Baru wrote that self-reliance could be understood as "the strategy and the perception of our relative merits and constraints, of our opportunities and of our tasks. Even where deviations had occurred from this strategy they were viewed as temporary departures, as products of expediency, as being forced on an unwilling government. "He based this on a lecture in 1982 at Sydenham College, in which economist Ashok Mitra said,

"Self-reliance to us did not mean shutting out the windows to the world, even a certain quantum of external assistance was incorporated in our definition of the term, but we did certainly rule out the probability of chronic foreign aid. India, we argued, was not lacking inherently either in manpower or natural resources, including mineral resources. We had also the advantage of starting out with a certain basic infra-structure of industrial and technological skills and facilities, which was superior to that possessed by most developing countries at the time. In addition, there was the advantage, we thought, of having a political leadership keen to pursue the goal of self-reliance. We opted for self-reliance because, in our view, it was the most rational economic course."

However, following India's decision to take International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans in the 1980s and taking into account the general economic situation in the country, Baru concluded that "it would seem altogether inappropriate to refer to "self-reliance" any longer as constituting a national goal."

### What is Women Empowerment?

Behind Every Successful Woman is A Tribe of Other Successful Women Who Have Her Back



Women's empowerment (or female empowerment) is the process of empowering women. It may be defined in several ways, including accepting women's viewpoints or making an effort to seek them, raising the status of women through education, awareness, literacy, and training. Women's empowerment equips and allows women to make life-determining decisions through the different problems in society. They may have the opportunity to redefine gender roles or other such roles, which in turn may allow them more freedom to pursue desired goals.

Women's empowerment has become a significant topic of discussion in development and economics. Economic empowerment allows women to control and benefit from resources, assets, and income. It also aids the ability to manage risk and improve women's well-being. It can result in approaches to support trivialized genders in a particular political or social context. While then used, the people interchangeably of gender empowerment concerns more comprehensive concept any of the distinction between biological and gender as a role. Women empowerment helps in boosting the status of women through literacy, education, training and awareness creation. Furthermore, women's empowerment refers to women's ability to make strategic life choices which had been previously denied them.

Nations, businesses, communities and groups may benefit from the implementation of programs and policies that adopt the notion of female empowerment. Empowerment of women enhances the quality and the quantity of human resources available for development. Empowerment is one of the main procedural concerns when addressing human rights and development.

## METHODS

### Economic Empowerment

Since the 1980s, the push for neoliberalism prioritizes competitiveness and self-reliance as a measurement for economic success. The individuals and their identifying communities that do not meet society's favoured neoliberal standards are looked down upon and are prone to lower their own self-esteem. Some groups who do not fit the preferable neoliberal image are the lower working class and the unemployed.

Specifically, neoliberalism has negatively impacted women's self-worth through its welfare reform policies. Mary Corcoran et al. theorize that conservative welfare reformers believe in welfare dependency as the cause of poverty. This leads welfare reformers to widen the criteria for an individual to qualify as a welfare recipient, limiting the number of people dependent on welfare. These criteria include: work requirements and time limits, rapidly pushing women into the labour market. The active push for women to enter the labour market reinforces the notion that single mothers and unpaid care labourers are unproductive to the American economy. In consequence, women are forced to settle for low-paying unstable jobs while having to manage their maternal and domestic responsibilities. Scholars believe welfare reform's underlying purpose is to disempower women by suppressing women's agency and economic independence. By creating opportunities for women empowerment like job training, women can counteract the social implications of neoliberalism and specifically welfare reform.

In addition, policy makers are suggested to support job training to aid in entrance in the formal markets. One recommendation is to provide more formal education opportunities for women that would allow for higher bargaining power in the home. They

would have more access to higher wages outside the home; and as a result, make it easier for women to get a job in the market.

Women's empowerment and achieving gender equality helps society ensure the sustainable development of a country. Many world leaders and scholars have argued that sustainable development is impossible without gender equality and women's empowerment. Sustainable development accepts environmental protection, social and economic development, including women's empowerment. In the context of women and development, empowerment must include more choices for women to make on their own.

Strengthening women's access to property inheritance and land rights is another method used to economically empower women. This would allow them better means of asset accumulation, capital, and bargaining power needed to address gender inequalities. Often, women in developing and underdeveloped countries are legally restricted from their land on the sole basis of gender. Having a right to their land gives women a sort of bargaining power that they would not normally have; they gain more opportunities for economic independence and formal financial institutions.

Race has an integral impact on women's empowerment in areas such as employment. Employment can help create empowerment for women. Many scholars suggest that when we discuss women's empowerment, discussing the different barriers that underprivileged women face, which makes it more difficult for them to obtain empowerment in society, is important when examining the impact of race in connection to employment. Significantly examining how opportunities are structured by gender, race, and class can transpire social change. Work opportunities and the work environment can create empowerment for women. Empowerment in the workplace can positively affect job satisfaction and performance, having equality in the workplace can greatly increase the sense of empowerment.

In the case women have the opportunity to settle for stable jobs, Women of colour encounter a lack of equal accessibility and privileges in work settings. They are faced with more disadvantages in the work place. Patricia Parker argues that African American women's empowerment is their resistance to control, standing up for themselves and not conforming to societal norms and expectations. In connection to power, feminist perspectives look at empowerment as a form of resistance within systems of unequal power relations. Within the societal setting of race, gender, and class politics, African American women's empowerment in the work environment "can be seen as resistance to attempts to fix meanings of appropriate identity and behaviour, where such meanings are interpreted as controlling, exploitative, and other-wise oppressive to African American women." When talking about women's empowerment, many scholars suggest examining the social injustices on women in everyday organizational life that are influenced by race, class, and gender.

Another methodology for women's economic empowerment also includes microcredit. Microfinance institutions aim to empower women in their community by giving them access to loans that have low interest rates without the requirement of collateral. More specifically, they (microfinance institutions) aim to give microcredit to women who want to be entrepreneurs. The success and efficiency of microcredit and microloans is controversial and constantly debated. Some critiques claim that microcredit alone doesn't guarantee women have control over

the way the loan is used. Microfinance institutions don't address cultural barriers that allow men to still control household finances; as a result, microcredit may simply be transferred to the husband. Microcredit doesn't relieve women of household obligations, and even if women have credit, they don't have the time to be as active in the market as men.

### Political Empowerment

Businesswoman Ivanka Trump (right) and Japanese PM Shinzo Abe attending the World Assembly for Women in Tokyo to speak on women's rights and empowerment, 2017.

Political empowerment supports creating policies that would best support gender equality and agency for women in both the public and private spheres. Methods that have been suggested are to create affirmative action policies that have a quota for the number of women in policy making and parliament positions. As of 2017, the global average of women who hold lower and single house parliament positions is 23.6 percent. Further recommendations have been to increase women's rights to vote, voice opinions, and the ability to run for office with a fair chance of being elected. Because women are typically associated with child care and domestic responsibilities in the home, they have less time dedicated to entering the labour market and running their business Policies that increase their bargaining power in the household would include policies that account for cases of divorce, policies for better welfare for women, and policies that give women control over resources (such as property rights). However, participation is not limited to the realm of politics. It can include participation in the household, in schools, and the ability to make choices for one self. Some theorists believe that bargaining power and agency in the household must be achieved before one can move onto broader political participation

### Digital Skills Enhance Political Empowerment

Digital skills can facilitate women's engagement with local government and increase their decision-making power in their communities. The Women-gov project in Brazil and India, for instance, has helped women improve their understanding of and communication with local government via ICTs In Brazil, the project trained female community leaders to access and utilize online data on government health services to better respond to public health concerns in their communities. In India, the project worked with women's collectives to establish women-run, internet connected community information centres to facilitate applications for government assistance (including welfare and entitlements), which in turn improved linkages between the collectives, local authorities and public institutions

Women with digital skills are better able to make their voices heard on local issues and influence the outcome of decisions that affect themselves and their communities. Digital skills can also empower women to participate in political movements. For instance, the anonymity of ICTs may allow some women to avoid limitations on freedom of speech in repressive societies while collective mobilization through online networks can enable women to campaign on gender-based issues. Studies show an Iraqi women's group used a multimedia campaign, including an online component, to successfully lobby the Kurdish regional government to outlaw the practice of female genital mutilation. Images taken on mobile phones and distributed via social media have called attention to domestic violence in China and influenced media treatment of court cases on forced abortion.

### Feminist Approaches To Women Empowerment

Feminism is defined by the movement's goal of creating

women's empowerment. Two methods feminists use to facilitate a sense of women empowerment are consciousness-raising and building relationships with the women participants and their external oppressors.

### FINDINGS

Women represent half the World's Population, and gender inequality exists. In Every Nation on the planet. Until Women are given the same opportunities that men are, entire societies will be destined to perform below their true potentials. The greatest need of the hour Is change of Social Attitude to Women.

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